

THE
PLOT DISCOVERED;
OR
An ADDRESS
TO THE
PEOPLE,
AGAINST
MINISTERIAL TREASON.

By S. T. COLERIDGE.

BRISTOL, 1795.

*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo
Favete linguis.*

*Shut the eyes — against the Vulgar
Tongues — when Britain's*

Old Providence, Old

— "Ah Pitt! Thine arts are vain:
but dare speak, & when oppress'd, complain,
To Man the little privilege is given:
I should a discriminant curb it, I did to Thom
my Albion's genius tear the Villain's framed
And fling it piece meal to the fowls of Heav'n"
Host of Alfred bids a Rogue beware.



Hoc placet, O Superi, cum vobis vertere cuncta.

Propositum. Lucan: Lib. VII.

The freedom of discussion may be the top
of Ministers Place: that Minister is in it
ought to make use of his most virtuous Majority
bring in a Bill
binding to it Place the longue of Pen
hostile to the peace of Courtier often
So, as Pope says of his friend Addison
— "down for arts that caused themselves to rise

THE
PLOT DISCOVERED,

&c. &c.

WE have entrusted to Parliament the guardianship of our liberties, not the power of surrendering them. Shame fall on the mitred mufti, who aims to persuade us, that it is the Almighty's will that the greatest part of mankind should come into the world with saddles on their backs and bridles in their mouths, and the remaning few ready booted and spurred for the purpose of riding them. §

“THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE LAWS, BUT TO OBEY THEM!”—Ere yet this foul treason against the majesty of man, ere yet this blasphemy against the goodness of God be registered among our statutes, I enter my protest! Ere yet our laws as well as our religion be muffled up in mysteries, as a CHRISTIAN I protest against this worse than Pagan darkness! Ere yet the sword descends, the two-edged sword that is now waving over the head of Freedom, as a BRITON, I protest against slavery! Ere yet it be made legal for Ministers to act with vigour beyond law, as a CHILD OF PEACE, I protest against civil war!

Edm^d Burke

§ *Mind** justly then to the human This *Black*
A 2
Should be to Kings a sort of humble Black
That all his Subjects ought to wear a *padlock*
on their lips that no secret *should* be told

This is the brief moment, in which Freedom pleads on her knees: we will join her pleadings, ere yet she rises terrible to wrench the sword from the hand of her merciless enemy! We will join the still small voice of reason, ere yet it be overwhelmed in the great and strong wind, in the earthquake, and in the fire! These detestable Bills I shall examine in their undiminished proportions, as they first dared shew themselves to the light, disregarding and despising all subsequent palliatives and modifications. From their first state it is made evident beyond all power of doubt, what are the wishes and intentions of the present Ministers; and their wishes and intentions having been so evidenced, if the legislature authorize, if the people endure one sentence of such Bills from such manifest conspirators against the Constitution, that legislature will by degrees authorize the whole, and the people endure the whole—yea, that legislature will be capable of authorising even worse, and the people will be unworthy of better.

The first of these Bills is an attempt to assassinate the Liberty of the Press: the second, to smother the Liberty of Speech. And first of the first, which we shall examine clause by clause.—The outrage
offered

offered to his Majesty is the pretext—which outrage is ascribed to “the multitude of seditious pamphlets and speeches daily printed, published, and dispersed with unremitting industry and with a transcendant boldness.” At the time that Thomas Paine’s books were dispersed “with an unremitting industry and a transcendant boldness” unexampled since that time, was not the same complaint made in a proclamation from the throne? The circumstances stated as causes in this Bill, the same circumstances then existed; but did they appear to produce a similar effect? Were not the higher classes infatuated, were not the multitude maddened with excess of Loyalty? The dispersion therefore of seditious pamphlets was not the cause: *that* was the cause which gave to sedition the colouring of truth, and made disaffection the dictate of hunger, the present unjust, unnecessary and calamitous War—a War that brought dearth, and threatens slavery! It was hunger and the sense of insulted wrongs that urged the ignorant mob with misplaced indignation to utter groanings and hisses against the Sovereign; and with regard to the stone or bullet I can best express my sentiments by adopting the language of the resolutions affixed to the Sheffield address: That I truly

believe, there is only one herd of abandoned miscreants in his majesty's dominions capable of committing so wicked and treasonable an attack on the first magistrate of the land, those purjured conspirators against the lives and liberties of the people, the disbanded troops of spies and informers who, since the late state trials, had been out of employment.

But whatever the causes may have been, on account of these outrages the ministers "have judged that it is become necessary to provide a further remedy against all such treasonable and seditious practices and attempts. A man suspected from confused evidence of having thrown a stone at his Majesty has been committed for High Treason; and another who only exclaimed, no war! bread! no war! has been committed for a high misdemeanor: and yet it has been judged necessary to provide further remedies! O that our beloved Sovereign may never have cause through the machinations of his quacking ministers to adapt the old epitaph, I was well, they would make me better, and so destroyed me. In all ministerial measures there are two reasons, the real, and the ostensible. The ostensible reason of the present Bill we have heard; the real reason will not elude the search of common sagacity. The

existing laws of Treason were too clear, too unequivocal. Judges indeed (what will not Judges do?) Judges might endeavour to transfer to these laws their own flexibility; Judges might make strange interpretations. But English Juries could not, would not understand them. Hence instead of eight hecatombs of condemned traitors behold eight triumphant acquitted felons! Hinc illæ lacrymæ.—The present Bills were conceived and laid in the dunghill of despotism among the other yet unhatched eggs of the old Serpent. In due time and in fit opportunity they crawled into light. Genius of Britain! crush them!

The old Treason Laws are superseded by the exploded commentaries of obsequious Crown lawyers, the commentary has conspired against the text: a vile and useless slave has conspired to dethrone its venerable master. "If any person within the realm or without shall compass, imagine, invent, devise, or intend death or destruction, or any bodily harm tending to death or destruction, maim or wounding, imprisonment or restraint of the person of our sovereign Lord, the King, or if he levy war against his Majesty, or move or stir any foreigner or stranger to invasion—he shall be ad-

judged a traitor." We object not. But "whoever by printing, writing, preaching, or malicious and advised speaking, shall compass, or imagine, or devise to deprive or depose the King, or his heirs and successors from the style, power, and kingly name, of the imperial crown of this realm, he shall be adjudged a traitor." Here lurks the snake. To promulge what we believe to be truth is indeed a law beyond law ; but now if any man should publish, nay, if even in a friendly letter or in social conversation any should assert a Republic to be the most perfect form of government, and endeavour by all argument to prove it so, he is guilty of High Treason : for what he declares to be the more perfect, and the most productive of happiness, he recommends ; and to recommend a Republic is to recommend an abolition of the kingly name. By the existing treason laws a man so accused would plead, It is the privilege of an Englishman to entertain what speculative opinions he pleases, provided he stir up to no present action. Let my reasonings have been monarchical or republican, whilst I act as a royalist, I am free from guilt. Soon, I fear, such excuse will be of no avail. It will be in vain to alledge, that such opinions were not wished to be realized,

except

except as the result of progressive reformation and ameliorated manners ; that the author or speaker never dreamed of *seeing* them realized ; though he should expressly set forth, that they neither could be, nor would be, nor ought to be, realized in the present or the following reign ; still he would be guilty of high Treason : for though he recommends not an attempt to depose his present Majesty from the kingly name, yet he evidently recommends the denial of it to some one of his distant successors. All political controversy is at an end. Those sudden breezes and noisy gusts, which purified the atmosphere they disturbed, are hushed to deathlike silence. The cadaverous tranquillity of despotism will succeed the generous order and graceful indiscretions of freedom—the black moveless pestilential vapour of slavery will be inhaled at every pore. But, beware, O ye rulers of the earth! For it was ordained at the foundation of the world by the King of kings, that all corruption should conceal within its bosom that which will purify ; and THEY WHO SOW PESTILENCE MUST REAP WIRLWINDS.

But not only are the exertions of living genius to be smothered by the operation of this execrable clause !

clause ! All names of past ages dear to liberty are equally proscribed ! He who prints and publishes against monarchy, as well as he who writes against it, is a traitor. The future editions will be treasonable. If the legislature can pass, if the people can endure such a law, it will soon pass, they will easily endure a domiciliary inquest, which will go through our private and our public libraries with the expurgatorial besom ! This has been already done in Hanover ; it was done by order of the government there in the course of the last year. We hope and struggle to believe, that the measure proceeded entirely from the resident ministers ; we hope and struggle to believe, that the first magistrate of a free country, that a monarch whose forefathers the bold discussion of political principles placed and preserved on the throne of Great Britain, could not be the author of an edict which assumes the infallibility of the Pope, and the power of the inquisition. We hope and struggle to believe it, lest an unbidden and unwelcome suspicion force its way into our bosoms, that they, who ordered such a measure in Hanover, must wish it in England. Sages and patriots that being dead do yet speak to us, spirits of Milton, Locke, Sidney, Harrington ! that still wander through your native country, giving wisdom and inspiring

zeal ! the cauldron of persecution is bubbling against you,—the spells of despotism are being muttered ! Blest spirits ! assist us, lest hell exorcise earth of all that is heavenly !

Our ancestors were wisely cautious in framing the bill of treason ; they would not admit words as sufficient evidences of intention. How often does the tongue utter what the moment after the heart disapproves ! these indiscretions are blameable in the individual, but the frequency of them was honorable to the nation at large, as it demonstrated the unsuspecting spirit of a free government, too proud to be jealous !—Besides, words are easily mistated without ill-intention ; how easily then, where POWER CAN PAY PERJURY ? Hired swearers were not perhaps so numerous in former days, as (we may judge by the state trials) they are now. But our ancestors however had read, that when the rulers and high-priests were interested in making a man appear guilty, even the spotless innocence of the Son of God could not preserve him from false witnesses.

But I hear it suggested, that the two Acts will not be administered in all their possible stretch of implication ! Pale-hearted men, who cannot approve, yet who dare not oppose a most foul ministry,

try, is it come to this, that Britons should depend on clemency not justice, that Britons should whine to Ministers to stand between them and the law? But if honest pride and burning indignation prevent not the question in you, experience answers—that wherever it shall suit the purposes of a corrupt and abandoned ministry, these Acts will be administered to the utmost stretch of possible implication. Read the trial of Gerald, and then ask your own hearts, on what evidence a man may not be condemned? and what are these Bills but an edition of Scotch laws with large additions? Know ye not, there is a numerous peace-establishment of King's tradesmen, of pensioners, of hired spies, of hungry informers, and of witnesses most learned in their profession, who have graduated in guilt and passed through all the degrees of serviceable iniquity from loss of memory to equivocation, and from equivocation to perjury? Of these mysterious Slave-masons know ye not who is the grand master? And that from these he will find it possible to pack juries? And when not packed, are not Juries often ignorant, and sometimes timid? Do ye not know, that our nature is liable to corruption? and that to be delivered from evil we must not be led into temptation?

tation? Have we not then the authority of Christ for asserting that men, who have been made Judges by a ministry and hope to be made Lord Chancellors, may and sometimes will be the creatures of that ministry? But enough of so contemptible an argument for Bills so big with ruin? I paid it too great reverence, when I honored its nonsense with the ceremony of refutation.

The next clause of this Bill is, and be it further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that if any person or persons within that part of Great Britain called England, shall maliciously and advisedly, by writing, printing, preaching, speaking, express or publish any words, sentences, or other thing or things, to incite or stir up the people to hatred or dislike of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, or the established government and condition of this realm, every such person shall be liable to punishment such as is inflicted in cases of high misdemeanor; and if convicted of a second offence, be transported for seven years. This clause is, first of all, a gross libel on his Majesty. No Monarch ever yet reigned, and none ever will reign without some calumny and abuse. This is a debt which he pays to his situation. But where no occasion for
abuse

abuse exists, the offenders will be few and contemptible; and where the abuse is gross, our existing laws have provided severe penalties. But to declare by authority of parliament that the offenders are so numerous, and the abuse of so spreading and dangerous nature, that the severe penalties already enacted are inadequate to the preventing it, will not this suggest to every unprejudiced man the dread, that enemies so numerous could not have arisen without previous oppression, and that abuse so calculated to spread must have some foundation in truth? All censure intends to excite *dislike*; to forbid all discourses and publications that may tend to produce *dislike* of his Majesty, is in other words, to bestow on the first magistrate of a free country an impunity from all censure. I am aware, it will be objected, that such discourse or book must have uttered or published *maliciously*. But will the offender himself plead guilty to thy malicious intention? and if he himself does not plead guilty, what witnesses can be brought against the secrets of the heart? The law must in these cases judge of the intention by the effect; and where the effect is strong and clear, a complainant Judge will always find himself incapable of

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conceiving, how it could be produced, if not maliciously. **DISLIKE!** Gracious Heaven! To make such a law to prevent an idle talker from exciting **DISLIKE!** why it is arming a man cap-à-pee with cumbrous steel, to prevent the contingency of a scratch! Is not this a confession, that so bad is the state of his body, that a scratch might eventually terminate in a mortification! Punishment is unjust in proportion as the invective is true; punishment is unnecessary in proportion as the invective is false. For it confutes itself, and striking against a rock flies back, and repeating the diminished calumny proclaims only its own repulse. An abusive fellow followed Pericles home with much panegyrical reviling. Pericles conscious of its injustice, ordered his servants to light the man back again, as one who had chosen a delicate though unusual way of reminding him of his merits. But Pericles was a republican, and therefore it may be objected, not an apposite precedent; but, my friends! if Monarchs would behave like republicans, all their subjects would act as royalists. Secondly, this clause is pernicious as tending to shut out his Majesty from the possibility of hearing truth;—which I hold to be High Treason against the Sovereign's better part—his intellect. For this law
would

would prevent *all* censure of the King's measures. But so unfavourable are the circumstances with which a Monarch is necessarily surrounded, that advice offered to him by any of his people cannot be supposed likely to make any impression, unless conveyed in the most startling language. There is a somewhat in all power which makes it dead except to the strongest stimulants. But by what means can advice so couched be waisted to the ear of Royalty? The man who offers it becomes an accused felon (for the Secretary of War too sublime and *vigorous* for the slow-paced decencies of law holds that felony is a something not necessarily determined by the sentence of a Jury, but dependent on his individual opinion) the man who offers it becomes an accused felon. I have read, I think, that in some eastern courts the Ambassadors from Europe have their arms pinioned while they speak to the Despot. Our ministers faithful to Despotism, intend to improve on the hint, and no man who sets forth grievances (and who is therefore properly an Ambassador from the people) must speak to his Majesty, unless in handcuffs and in fetters. And when the people dare not advise, who will remain? Walsbys that breathe foul disorders into the ear of Majesty; and
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whole flights of Priests and Bishops, black men, and black men with white arms, like magpies and crows that pick out the eyes of sheep! Thirdly, this clause is a gross libel on human nature, for it forbids all writings and all speeches that excite hatred or dislike of the Constitution; now the power of exciting hatred or dislike consists in this only, in shewing or appearing to shew that any person or thing is hostile to happiness. To forbid therefore this demonstration, or this attempt to demonstrate, that the Constitution is hostile to the happiness of man, argues (supposing the ministers acted on principle) that they already possess a prior demonstration that this Constitution affords the utmost possible quantity of happiness, the standing point of eternal and omnipresent good. Now if these ministers believe this, namely, that the Constitution as it at present exists is the best possible, they must likewise believe either that there is no God, or if there be a God, that he is not all-powerful or not benevolent. For this said summum bonum as it at present exists, doth evidently prevent little evil and produce much. An omnipotent Devil in a good humour would grant a much better extreme of possible good. But if the present Con-

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stitution be progressive, if its only excellence, if its whole endurableness consist in motion; if that which it is be only good as being the step and mode of arriving at something better; if these be truths (and Despotism shall dote on the wretch who dares call them falsehoods,) then are our ministers most unnaturally dwarfing what they dare not at once destroy. As ladies of high rank and sensibility give gin to young dogs, even so are they drenching the Constitution with a poison, to prevent its further growth and keep it a fit plaything for themselves to dandle. This is the conclusion of the new Treason Bill. I will only add, that the word Majesty in its original signification, meant that weight which the will and opinions of the majority imparted. Majesty meant the unity of the people; the one point in which ten million rays concentrated. The antient *Lex Majestatis*, or law of Treason was intended against those who injured the *People*;—and Tiberius was the first who transferred this law from the people to the protection of tyrants.—In our laws the King is regarded as the voice and will of the people: which while he remains, it is consequently treasonable to conspire against him.

We

We proceed to the second Bill, for more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies. At my first glance over it, it recalled to me by force of contrast the stern simplicity and perspicuous briefness of the Athenian laws. But our minister's meaning generally bears an inverse proportion to the multitude of his words. If his declaration consist of fifty lines, it may be compressed into ten; if it extend to five hundred, it may be compressed into five. His style is infinitely porous: deprived of their vacuities the *το πᾶν*, the universe of his bills and speeches would take up less room than a nutshell. The Bill now pending is indeed as full-foliaged, as the Manchineel tree; (and like the manchineel, will poison those who are fools enough to slumber beneath it) but its import is briefly this—first, that the people of England should possess no unrestrained right of consulting in common on common grievances: and secondly, that Mr. Thelwall should no longer give political lectures.

The public amusements at the Theatre are already under ministerial controul. And if the tremendous sublimity of Schiller, if “the Robbers” can be legally suppressed by that thing yclept a Lord Chamberlain, in point of literary exhibition

it would be unreasonable for Mr. Thelwall to complain. But in proportion as he feels himself of little consequence he will perceive the situation of the ministry is desperate. Nothing could make him of importance but that he speaks the feelings of multitudes. The feelings of men are always founded in truth. The modes of expressing them may be blended with error, and the feelings themselves may lead to the most abhorred excesses. Yet still they are originally right: they teach man that something is wanting, something which he ought to have. Now if the premier with the influence of the wealthy and the prejudices of the ignorant on his side, were evidently struggling to supply these perceived desiderata, could an unsupported malcontent oppose him? Alas! it is the vice of this nation, that if a minister merely promise to increase the comforts or enlarge the liberties of the people, he instantly conjures up such a wild and overwhelming popularity, as enables him to execute with impunity the most ruinous schemes against both. But William Pitt knows, that Thelwall is the voice of tens of thousands, and he levels his parliamentary thunder-bolts against him with the same emotion with which Caligula wished

wished to see the whole Roman state brought together in *one* neck, that he might have the luxury of beheading it at *one* moment. But we shall revert to this clause in due time, and gird ourselves up to this consideration of the restrictions of the right of petitioning.

“Whereas assemblies of divers persons collected for the purpose or under the pretext of deliberating on public grievances, and of agreeing on petitions, complaints, remonstrances, declarations, or other addresses, to the King or to both houses or either house of Parliament, have of late been made use to serve the ends of factious and seditious persons to the great danger of the public peace, &c.”

Where? when? and by whom have factious and seditious speeches been made, and the public peace endangered, by assembled petitioners? Unless these Questions are circumstantially answered, and the answers proved by legal evidence, an act for repealing the Constitution will have passed on the strength of a ministerial assertion. Where, when, and by whom? Within the last years in various parts of the kingdom heavy grievances have called together crowded meetings. Which of these have endangered the public

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peace?

peace? As far as my information, as far as the newspaper accounts may be trusted, the more numerous the assembly, the more strict has been the good order. What were the factious and seditious speeches? Let them be specified. Are they such as Locke and Lord Somers would have disavowed? Or were they only bold and constitutional remonstrances against dark and ministerial iniquities? If not such, if they are truly factious and seditious (that is, exciting to violence) the existing laws are sufficient authority for apprehending the speakers; let them be brought forwards and examined; let them and the ministers be confronted! Let the Honourable Mr. DUNDAS be asked, whether or no they are among his old correspondents! or if the *modesty* of this senator be overpowered, spare his blushes, and intreating the Right Honourable Mr. PITT to recover his *Memory*, put him upon his oath—not on his oath—for why should God's name be taken *in vain*? but closely question him, whether or no those speakers are not the “Reporters of Government? Gentlemen (as a chief Justice would express himself) who have received acknowledgements for secret services? It is highly probable, that this would appear to be the real case; and if it be
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only possible, while the contrary remains unproved, such a Whereas must be a most inadequate ground for the present Bill.

“ BE it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and after the no meeting of any description of persons, exceeding the number of (other persons than and except any meeting of any county, riding, or division, called by the Lord Lieutenant, Custos, or more justices of the peace of the county, or place where such meeting shall be holden, or any meeting of any corporate body,) shall be holden for the purpose or on the pretext of considering or for preparing any petition, complaint, remonstrance, declaration, or other addresses, to the king, or to both houses, or to either house of parliament, for alteration of matters established in church and state, for the purpose, or on the pretext of deliberating upon any grievance in church or state, unless notice of the intention to hold such meeting, and of the time and place, when and where the same shall be proposed to be holden, and of the purpose for which the same shall be proposed to be holden, and of the matter or matters to be propounded and deliberated upon in such meeting, shall be given by public advertisement in days at the least before such meeting shall be holden, and unless the authority to insert such notice shall be signed by persons at the least, being housekeepers resident within the county, city, or place where such meeting shall be proposed to be holden, and unless such authority so signed shall be written at the foot of a true copy of such notice, and shall be delivered to the person required to insert the same in any such as aforesaid; which person shall cause such notice and authority to be carefully preserved, and shall produce the same whenever thereto required by any one or more justice or justices of the peace, for the county, city, town, or place, where such person shall reside, or where such shall be printed; and shall also, if required, cause a true copy of such notice, and authority so signed, to be delivered to any such justice who shall require the same.”

"Other than except any meeting called by the Lord Lieutenant" &c.

Admirable exceptions ! and truly consoling to the six millions who inhabit " that part of Great Britain called England." The unrestrained Right of petitioning against grievances confined to Lord Lieutenants, Sheriffs of Counties, and Bodies Corporate ! to men and to sets of men, against whom as being themselves an heavy grievance, we should do well to petition. And to Justices of Peace ; men appointed in a moment by Government and displaced in a moment : whose office is absolutely dependent on the will of the Crown, and who are therefore nothing more or less than a scattered Army of King's Guards ! men whose own privileges are an insult on Liberty, are appointed exclusively the guardians of British Liberty ;—ah no ! not her guardians, but her sole Executors !

" Any special circumstances"

All the former particularizing of circumstances, is superseded and rendered unnecessary by the phrase " any special circumstances"—which phrase gives to any brace of trading Justices an unlimited and arbitrary power of dispersing the most numerous and respectable assembly : and if human nature
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and common sense struggle against obedience, to seize them as felons or slaughter them as rebels. If this clause had passed, the word "constitution" ought to have been erased. The Bill would have been not only in its consequences (such perhaps it still is) but in its immediate operation, a repeal of the Constitution. A government indeed we should have had: there is not a slave-plantation in the world that has not a government! but a Constitution, if it mean any thing, signifies certain known Laws, which limit the expectations of the people and the discretionary powers of the legislature. Such is the Bill of Rights; the most essential article of which would have been annulled: this clause therefore could not have become a law, or have been entitled to moral obedience. It would have been only an EDICT, which holding the pistol of military Despotism at our hearts, would have cried, "Stand and deliver up your Freedom!" Burleigh, who lived in the reign of Elizabeth, said truly, England can never be undone but by a Parliament:" for Burleigh said it before the contract of the Bill of Rights had been entered into by the people and their governors. But now we cannot be *legally* undone even by a Parliament: for (as Bolingbroke remarks) Parliament cannot annul the Constitution.

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The Constitution is the Law paramount, and prevents the supreme from becoming an arbitrary power. Whenever the CONSTITUTION shall be violated, then the Right of resistance will commence; a Right restricted only by prudence, that is, a knowledge of the means. Such sentiments "amount to legal Treason," exclaims our minister. So said King James the second, and the Pope swore by his infallibility that King James spoke truth! But our ancestors thought otherwise. They thought that the people alone were the rightful vicegerents of God, and that to the people is delegated the divine attribute of "exalting the humble and debasing the mighty." So "the descendant of a long line of Kings" they sent a begging, and a foreigner brought from a petty spot in Germany they placed on the throne of Great Britain and Ireland. May the principles, which gave it to him, preserve it to his descendants! Amen! Amen!

This execrable clause has been withdrawn. The dark Nimrod has hastily skulked off scared by the drowsy roar of the slow-awakening Lion: but the Coward's *wish* shall not be forgotten! Is it possible, that this man should remain the confidential servant of a free nation? that a nation should admit one

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encroachment on Freedom from a wretch who dared menace its total destruction? Is it possible, that a Matron should court the company and suffer the lesser loves of the foul-hearted Libertine, whom she had with difficulty repelled from the last violence? then were the check, which he has received, only the *fie! fie!* of a willing Prude, who rejected his haste, but approves his passion.

But there are dreadful encroachments yet unrepelled. The poison is disguised not killed.

1. Any man, whom a magisterial neighbour chuses to insult under pretext of suspicion, is liable to a domiciliary inquest. Our houses are no longer our castles. 2. A justice of peace* cannot indeed immediately disperse an assembly of petitioners, but he can prevent them from deliberating: he
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* Is it no grievance (said Sir J. Hinde Cotton in the debate on the repeal of the Septennial act, A. D. 1734) that a little dirty justice of the peace, the meanest and vilest tool a minister can make use of, a tool who perhaps subsists by his being in the commission; and who may be turned out of that subsistence whenever the minister pleases?—Is this, I say, no grievance that such a tool should have it in his power, by reading a proclamation, to put perhaps twenty or thirty of the best subjects in England to immediate death, without any trial or form of law? See Debates of the Commons, Vol. viii. p. 179. The intention of the Riot Act being to seize and bring to regular trial by jury, (see the act) nothing can be more absurd (besides the cruelty of it) than

can stop every speech and seize every speaker, if he chuse to suspect it or him to be seditious :—and if by the wanton and moorish exercise of this privilege he can ensnare the assembly into marks of indignation, then the clause (withdrawn only in appearance) commences its bloody work.

Of unexampled measures the causes and effects might be deemed uncertain ; the prophecies of philosophical prescience too often acquire authority only from their accomplishment. But these Bills
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the application of fire-arms ; because (as Burgh most sagaciously remarks) fire-arms do not seize people but murder them ! It is now three or four hundred years (said a speaker in the House of Peers—see *Debates of the Peers*, Vol. v. 172.) since fire-arms first came in use amongst us ; yet the law has never suffered them to be made use of by the common officers of justice. Pikes, halberts, battie-axes, and such like, are the only weapons that can be made use of according to law, by such officers, and the reason is extremely plain—because, with such weapons they can seldom or ever hurt much less kill any but such as are really opposing or assaulting them : whereas if you put fire-arms into their hands, they may as probably hurt or kill the innocent as the guilty. See Burgh's *political Disquisitions*, Vol. iii. page 230. the last of the three volumes was published in 1775. The whole work should be in the possession of every lover of freedom ; its remarks on laws and government are as profound as they are pointed, and it is an invaluable treasure to those, whose occupations allow them but little time for reading, on account of the multitude and pertinence of historic facts collected. He who carefully peruses the “*Political Disquisitions*” will meet with little new information in later writers.

though most strange, are not new. Lord Grenville professes to imitate the "precautions of our ancestors;" and the precedents, which he would pursue, are those of Elizabeth and Charles the second. To ascertain therefore what effects they *will* produce, and to what purposes they *will* be employed, we need only revolve the pages of history and discover what effects they *did* produce, and to what purposes they *were* employed. The measures of Elizabeth were imitated by the first James, and deemed safe precedents by the first Charles; who, "wisely † and spiritedly adopted such provisions and passed such laws, as gave a security to the Monarchy, as *the essential part* and pillar of the Constitution." And it is in imitation of these illustrious examples, that he (Lord Grenville) as a servant of the Crown, called on their Lordships to pursue similar measures of precaution and safety!!" Such measures, good Lord Grenville, produced that civil commotion, *vulgarly* called, the great REBELLION! The measures and laws of the second Charles followed up by the second James,

† From Lord Grenville's speech, Friday, Nov. 6th 1795, quoted on the authority of the Senator, or Clarendon's Parliamentary Chronicle, page 121 of the third number, of the present session.

James, produced that other commotion, *vulgarly** called, a Revolution.

Such *effects* did these measures eventually produce: and as to what *purposes* they were applied, history informs that they were employed to

* "Thoughts on the English Government," a pamphlet attributed to Mr. Reeves, chief justice of Newfoundland, and captain commandant of the spy-gang. I take this opportunity to enter my protest against the prosecution. I am afraid, that the pleasure generally felt when the attack against Mr. Reeves was commenced, arose from a something like revengeful hatred towards the man. Moral truth, (by which I mean all that we in our consciences believe to be true,) may be nevertheless criminal and libellous when directed against private characters; for the charge will reach the minds of many who cannot be competent judges of the truth or falsehood of facts to which themselves were not witnesses against a man whom they do not know. But no part of this reasoning applies against political writings. Government concerns all generally and no one in particular: all are equally witnesses; if the charge be truth, it ought to be received with gratitude; if false, it is easily detected; and the effort being made for common good, the intention should be taken for the deed. I wish it to be understood as my opinion that the opposition have disgraced themselves by their alacrity to persecute. They could have no proof that Mr. Reeves did not believe what he published; and if he believed it, and believed it to be for the public good, and yet the opposition think him a fit object of punishment, I am afraid, that the difference between the ins and the outs is not so great as we wish or imagine. Mr. Pitt who had been advised of the pamphlet, and (together with Mr. Wyndham) at first attempted to defend it, has now gone over to the side of the accusers; for the accusers were on the side of despotism, and our ministers were prompted by inspiration of the evil spirit to adopt one text of scripture—If satan cast out satan, he is divided against himself, how then shall his kingdom stand?

to destroy first the liberty of the Press, secondly, the freedom of speech : in short, to scare away the people from the exercise of all right of political interference. As sufficient evidence of the first, we refer to the well-known case of Page, who in the reign of Elizabeth had his right hand barbarously cut off for having written against a marriage alliance of the Queen with the Duke of Anjou : and as proof of the second, we shall quote a passage from historical essays on the English constitution, describing the conduct of the pensioned parliament of Charles the Second, from whose reign the placemen of George the Third adduce most apposite precedents : "As the people had in both cases lost the exercise of their annual power of election, with that they had lost the remedy for all their grievances. And under this mode of things may be observed all the marks of tyranny that can be found under the despotic government of *one* man. The laws were no longer any protection to the innocent. Judgment and justice were directed by court-policy : severity and cruelty took the place of mercy and moderation : flitting of noses, cutting of ears, whipping, *pil-lorying*, branding, fining, *imprisoning*, *hanging*, and
beheading,

beheading, were the constant lot of those who had virtue enough to speak, write or act in defiance of constitutional Liberty. And so far was the House of Commons from relieving the people under this dreadful distress, that they contributed all in their power to prevent even their cries and prayers from either approaching the throne or themselves. They passed a Law, by which no man durst ask his neighbour to join him in a petition for relief to the King or either House of Parliament. It was a melancholy consideration to see the people refused the benefit of prayers and tears for relief AGAINST THEIR OWN INFAMOUS DEPUTIES. Hist. Ess. Engl. Const. 120.

But we will take a nearer view of the subject. These Bills are levelled against all who excite hatred or contempt of the Constitution and Government: that is, all who endeavour to prove the Constitution and Government defective, corrupt, or fraudulent. (For it has been before observed, that all detection of weakness, imposture, or abuse, necessarily tend to excite hatred or contempt.) Now the Constitution and Government are defective and corrupt, or they are not. If the former, the Bills are iniquitous, since they would *kill off* all who promulge truths necessary to the progression

of

of human happiness : of the latter, (that is, if the Constitution and Government are perfect) the Bills are still iniquitous, for they destroy the sole boundary which divides that Government from Despotism, and *change* that Constitution, from whose present perfectness they derive their only possible justification. In order to prove these assertions, we must briefly examine the British Constitution, or mode of Government.

Governments have assumed many different forms ; but in their essence and properties, all possible modes of Government are reducible to these three : Government *by* the people, Government *over* the people, and Government *with* the people.

The Government is *by* the people, when the affairs of the whole are directed by all actually present ; as among the American Tribes, and (perhaps*) in Athens and some other of the ancient Grecian States, or by all *morally* present, that is, where every man is represented, and the representatives act according to instructions. Such, I trust,

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* We say *perhaps* on account of the large proportion of Slaves in the ancient states, which seems to destroy their claim to the titles of republic.

will be the Government of France. France ! whose crimes and miseries posterity will impute to us. France ! to whom posterity will impute their virtues and their happiness.

Government *over* the people is known by the name of Despotism, or arbitrary Government : which term does not necessarily imply that one man possesses exclusively the power and direction of the state, for this is no where the case. The Grand Seignior has his DIVAN : ‡ nor does even the King of Spain dare act in direct opposition to the wishes of the Priests and Grandees ; who in *every* country influence the measures of the Government, and partake in its rapine. Despotism is that Government, in which the people at large have no voice in the legislature, and possess no other safe or established mode of political interference : in few words, where the majority are always acted upon, never acting.

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‡ In reality the Government of Turkey is more free in its forms than the British. They have a Constitution, which determines the rights of the subject and of the Emperor ; I mean, the Koran : and they have a grand national council, called, the ULAMA, composed of some taken from the people, and of others, the Moulahs, the hereditary Counsellors of the state. If the grand Seignior violate the Constitution, the ULAMA have the right of deposing him : and without a decree of the ULAMA he cannot be deposed.

The *third* mode is Government *with* the people. This ought to be a *progressive* Government ascending from the *second* mode to the first: at least, it is bad or good according to its distance from, or proximity to, the first mode.

The Constitution and Government of Great Britain is evidently not the first mode, that is, a Government *by* the people. They who contend that it is the second mode, will detail from what the people at large are excluded: they, who would prove it to be the third or mixed mode, must point out to what the people are admitted. And for the honour of our country let these have the first hearing. We are astonished (these would say) at the audacity as well as the blindness of men who dare entertain a doubt on this subject. The English Constitution is the freest under heaven: our Liberty suffers restrictions only to acquire steadiness and security. The people by their proxies in the House of Commons, are a check on the nobility, and the nobility a check on the people: while the King is a check on both. The best disciplined people are subject to giddy moments, which will be most effectually resisted by the wisdom of men educated from their infancy for the senatorial

office ; whose privileges and even prejudices are an antidote against the epidemic disorders of discontent, and thirst of innovation. And what is the King, but the majestic guardian of Freedom, gifted with privileges that will incline, and prerogatives that enable him to prevent the legislative from assuming the executive power : the union of which is one distinguishing feature of tyranny ? such is the Constitution, concerning which it is asked whether or no it be Despotism !!!

Their opponents reply, it is very possible to sketch out an admirable theory of Government, and then *call* it the British Constitution. A philosopher, who should attack the Popish, or Abyssinian Creeds, would not be satisfied, if in answer to him the defendant should prove the excellence and perfectness of the Gospels. We do not ask what a British Constitution might be, nor what the British Constitution has been, we enquire what it now is. We affirm, that a Government, under which the people at large neither directly or indirectly exercise any sovereignty, is a Despotism. You have asserted that the people act by their proxies in the House of Commons : and Blackstone (Vol. I. 171.) says, " In England where the people

do not debate in a collective body but by representation, the exercise of this sovereignty consists in the choice of representatives. If then it can be proved, that the people at large "have proxies," or "debate by representation," or have "the choice of representatives," the question will decide in your favour who assert the British Constitution to be the second or mixed mode of Government. If these points cannot be proved, in favour of us who suspect it to be a Despotism. Now we are of opinion, not only that such points cannot be made evident, but that the contrary may be demonstrated. The people (you say) exercise a legislative power by proxies, that is, by the majority in the House of Commons. But in the House of Commons three hundred and six are nominated or elected to be returned by one hundred and sixty Peers and Commoners with the Treasury, and three hundred and six are more than a majority: the majority therefore of the House of Commons are the choice, and of course the proxies of the Treasury, and the one hundred and sixty two. † Of the rest (that is,

† Consult "the state of the representation of England and Wales, delivered to the Society, the friends of the people, associated for the purpose of obtaining a parliamentary reform. In this dispassionate report, the names of the one hundred and sixty two are given, and the boroughs specified; both these for which they nominate, and those which they influence, so as always to secure the return.

the minor number of the House of Commons) some are elected by corporate bodies, others through the undue practices of returning officers, and twenty eight have seats in parliament by *compromises*. And after that these are subtracted, with regard to the yet remaining members, it would be an insult to common sense to assert, they are elected by the people at large. The voters are so contemptibly few, that for this reason only they are almost or altogether useless: and from non-refr-
 dence, taking up of freedoms, complicated rights, &c. &c. their charges for voting are so enormous, that they become worse than useless: since in order to be elected by them many men ruin themselves. And for what? from public spirit? Credat who likes I am sure “Judæus Apella” will not; the cunning Isaac would tell you that those, who buy dear, cannot live by selling cheap. If to all this you add the drunkenness, perjury, and murder that attend a general election, you must draw an un-
 heightened picture which would make every honest man wish that the lesser number of the House of Commons were elected as the majority (or actual legislative power) that is, by the one hundred and sixty two Peers, Gentlemen, and Treasury. The right of election therefore, as it at present exists in
 England,

England, must be considered not as an exception to Despotism, but as making it more operose and expensive from the increased necessity of corruption. The people at large exercise no sovereignty either personally, or by representation. Such would be the reply of those who might contend that the Government of England is Despotism. The Constitutionalists, those of them, I mean, who condescend to argue, would be forced to allow the truth of this statement: but they would attempt to do away the consequences. "If (they would say) men the most likely by their qualifications to know and promote the public interest, be actually returned to Parliament, it signifies little who return then. We *have* a House of Commons composed of 548 members, in which number are to be found the most considerable Landholders and Merchants of the kingdom; the heads of the Army, the Navy, and the Law; the occupiers of great offices in the State; together with many private individuals eminent by their knowledge, eloquence, or activity. Now if the Country be not safe in such hands, in whose may it confide its interests? if such a number of such men be liable to the influence of corrupt motives, what assembly of men will be secure from the same danger?

danger? the different *interests* are actually represented, and of course, the people *virtually*." Paley Mor: and Pol. Philosophy, Vol. II. 220.

Such is Mr. Paley's solution. The plausibility of his reasonings amuses not satisfies the opponents. Struck (they say) with their ingenuity and acuteness, we thence infer that first among the first, the author himself must have detected their fallacy. Charity with unwilling ear half-listens to the report, that the reverend Moralist * *cannot afford to keep a conscience*. In whose hands can the public welfare be safely entrusted, if not to the heads of the Army, the Navy, and the Law? men receiving much and expecting more, men, who must have cut and squared their notions and feelings to the grand scheme of *getting forward in the world?* to answer one question by another, in whose hands could it be worse intrusted? are not men who are the *servants* of Government out of the house, likely to prove its very convenient *friends* within the house? and *merchants*! has the Archdeacon never heard of *contracts*, and how judiciously they may be distributed! and "many individuals eminent by their abilities

* Φωναντα συνετοισι' ες δε το παν
Εριμνεος κατιζει.

abilities and eloquence!" that is, in plain language, needy young men of genius are occasionally picked up by one party or the other, presented with a title or a place, and then brought forwards as rhetorical gladiators for the amusement of the good people of England. A prize or two gained at Oxford sometimes proves an excellent advertisement to a young man who wants the lucrative office of an accommodating legislator. With regard to the independent landholders, they are indeed independent of the people. Their honesty is therefore an *accident*, and must not be admitted into calculation. When it occurs, it may ameliorate our service, but (unless the mode of representation be improved) it cannot make us freemen; I mean, that although it may occasionally procure good laws, it cannot secure to us the permanence of them. It is security which distinguishes liberty from a virtuous Despotism: and this security never exists unless when the legislative power is in the hands of those, whose worldly self-interests manifestly preponderate in favour of the incorrupt use of it. It has indeed been affirmed, that we are secure with the wealthy: since in impoverishing their Country they must injure themselves most of all, and that their wealth lifts them above the

reason of temptation. We might quote in answer
 every page of the history of England for the last
 hundred years: but supposing the objection not to
 have been considered in fact, we yet deny the pro-
 bability of it. For first the tax is not levied
 in equal proportions, so that without directly
 making himself a legislator man vote away the
 substance of the poor: secondly, where the actual
 efficient independent legislator are so few, and
 the revenues of Government so immense, the ad-
 ministration can always put into a great number
 of pockets, uncalculable more than they take from an
 estate: thirdly, the wealth of a man from lifting him
 above temptation exposes him to it. A man of
 immense fortune lives in splendour and luxury, which
 long habit make him consider essential to happi-
 ness. He has perhaps a number of children, all of
 whom share his affection equally. He wishes that
 all his children should continue to live in the sit-
 uation which they have been brought up, but by the
 law of primogeniture the eldest only will inherit
 the means of so doing. Hence he seeks fortune
 for the rest in the enormous patronage of the crown.
 A man of moderate wealth is not exposed to the
 temptation. His rank does not make industry dis-
 graceful, and by industry all his children may

be as well off as their father. Besides (though we would not dispeople St. Stephens's by such an † exclusion-Bill, as was passed in the days of Cromwell) yet while gaming is so much the rage, no man can be safely called wealthy, or supposed to be armed against temptation. Thus the actual possessors of power are few, and independent of the people : which is Despotism. And the manners of the Great are depraved, the sources of corruption incalculable, and consequently the temptations to private and public wickedness numerous and mighty : all which unite in precluding the probability of its proving a *virtuous* Despotism.

Hitherto nothing has been adduced that truly distinguishes our Government from Despotism : it seems to be a Government *over*, not *by*, or *with* the people. But this conclusion we disavow. The Liberty of the Press, (a power resident in the people) gives us an *influential* sovereignty. By books necessary information may be dispersed ; and by information the public will may be formed ; and

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† None were eligible to parliament at this time, but persons fearing God : none who denies the scripture to be the word of God : *no habitual swearer and curser : no drunkard : no adulterer : no gamblers : no fornicators : no &c.* Parl : Hist : XX. 386.

reach of temptation. We might quote in answer every page of the history of England for these last hundred years : but supposing the assertion not to have been confuted by facts, we yet deny the probability of it. For first, the taxes are not levied in equal proportions, so that without directly injuring himself a legislator may vote away the pittance of the poor : secondly, where the actual, efficient, independent legislators are so few, and the revenues of Government so immense, the administration can always put into a great man's pocket incalculably more than they take from his estate : thirdly, his wealth so far from lifting him above temptation exposes him to it. A man of large fortune lives in a splendour and luxury, which long habit makes him consider essential to happiness. He has perhaps a number of children, all of whom share his affection equally. He wishes that *all* his children should continue to live in the stile in which they have been brought up, but by the law of primogeniture the eldest only will possess the means of so doing. Hence, he seeks fortunes for the rest in the enormous patronage of the crown. A man of moderate wealth is not exposed to this temptation. His rank does not make industry disgraceful, and by industry all his children may
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by the right of petitioning that will may be expressed; first, perhaps, in low and distant tones such as befit the children of peace; but if corruption deafen power, gradually increasing till they swell into a deep and awful thunder, the VOICE OF GOD, which his vicegerents must hear, and hearing dare not disobey. This unrestricted right of over-awing the Oligarchy of Parliament by constitutional expression of the general will forms our liberty: it is the sole boundary that divides us from Despotism.

Ταλευθερον δ' εκεινο, τις θελει' πολει

Χρησθον τι Βουλευμ' εις μετον φερειν, εχων.

Και ταυθ' ο χρηζων, λαμπρος εσθ'. ο μη θελων

Σιγα' τι τρωτων εσιν ισαιτερον πολει;

EURIP. SUPPLIC. 440.

By the almost winged communication of the Press, the whole nation becomes one grand Senate, fervent yet untumultuous. By the right of meeting together to petition (which, Milton says, is good old english for *requiring*) the determinations of this Senate are embodied into legal form, and conveyed to the *executive* branch of Government, the Parliament. The present Bills annihilate this right. The *forms* of it indeed will remain;

remain; (the *forms* of the Roman republic were preserved under Tiberius and Nero) but the reality will have flown. No political information from the Press can previously enlighten the people; and if they meet, the deliberation must be engrossed by the hireling defenders of that scheme of cruelty and imposture, which the ministry chuse to call our Constitution. We can no longer consult in common on common grievances. Our assemblies will resemble a silent and sullen mob of discontented slaves who have surrounded the palace of some eastern tyrant. By the operation of Lord Grenville's Bill, the Press is made useless. Every town is insulated: the vast conductors are destroyed by the which the electric fluid of truth was conveyed from man to man, and nation to nation. A French Gentleman in the reign of Lewis the fourteenth was comparing the French and English writers with all the boastfulness of national prepossession. Monsieur (replied an Englishman better versed in the principles of freedom than the canons of criticism) there are but two subjects worthy the human intellect—Politics and Religion, our state here, and our state hereafter: and on neither of these *dare* you write! This spirited reproof may now be retorted on us. By Mr. Pitt's Bill Britons
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are allowed to petition—with Justices of Peace at their elbow ! Justices of Peace invested with absolute censorial power over the individuals, and the chance-right of military domination over the assembly. British Liberty leaves her cell by permission, and walks abroad to take the air between two jailors ; fettered, and handcuffed, and with a gag in her mouth !!!

There are four things, which being combined constitute Despotism. 1. The confusion of the executive and legislative branches. 2. The direct or indirect exclusion of all popular interference. 3. A large military force kept separate from the people. 4. When the punishments of state-offenders are determined and heavy, but what constitutes state-offences left indefinite, that is, dependent on the will of the minister, or the interpretation of the Judge. Let the present Bills pass, and these four things will be *all* found in the British Government. 1. By the enormous patronage of the crown and the depravity of manners among the great, by the immensity of the powers of corruption and the fewness of the persons to be corrupted, the executive branch is actually the legislative. 2. The Liberty of the Press abolished, and the right of
free

free discussion in petitioning assemblies, the people of Britain will possess no greater controul over their governors than the inhabitants in Russia.

3. A vast military force is maintained throughout the kingdom for the purpose of intimidating the disaffected; and that the soldiers may become in their notions and feelings a body distinct from citizens they are placed in barracks, instead of the constitutional mode of scattering them among their countrymen. (The sum of three hundred thousand pounds has been expended in building these barracks in less than two years.) 4. The Treason and Sedition Bills are so framed, that they include all men who recommend reform by the only possible mode of recommendation, the detection of a defectiveness in our Constitution, and of iniquity and abuse in our Government. The selection of particular persons for punishment depends entirely on the minister. The Bills are a vast aviary, and all the honest are incaged within it.

In 1660 the people of Denmark made a voluntary surrender of their liberties to the crown; and it is said, they have found it a wise and beneficial measure. I am not acquainted with the Danish Constitution prior to this, nor have I seen the form of
their

their petition ; I will draw out what I suppose it might have been ; and let me be pardoned, if the notions are too much *anglicized*.

To our sovereign Lord, the King, a Petition from
the oppressed People of DENMARK.

SIRE !

WE have been dreaming that we were a free nation : and when the voice of truth has half-awakened us, we have scared her away with the angry impatience of slumber, and again resigned ourselves to the pleasing delusion. But, sire ! we are now awake ! we perceive that we are not free, and we are conscious likewise, that from our ignorance or depravity we are incapable of true freedom. The sole objects of the present petition are, that you would make our chains less heavy, and prevent our manners from becoming more depraved : and in order to this, that you would be graciously pleased to assume to yourself the *forms* of that absolute power, the realities of which you have long possessed. Even in that house, which in our old laws is supposed to be the organ of the people ; a large majority of the members hold their seats by their own right, or by the nomination of private patrons. The remainder are elected indeed ; but
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the electors are so few, that they must be considered a burdensome privileged order, and in no wise the people. Their votes are notoriously bought; and so ignorant and corrupt are they, that the right of election is not merely useless; it is fatal to our prosperity and morals. It is a right given to them to sell their consciences: a right to bring down the curse of Heaven upon the nation by the frequency and daringness of their perjuries: a right by the contagion of their gluttony, drunkenness, and party-feuds to render us less and less susceptible of that liberty, with the forms of which it would mock us. And with regard to the legislature, we are conscious, sire! that the plans, which your royal wisdom and the wisdom of your honourable counsellors prepare in your cabinet, are always adopted by the house of nobles, and by that body, misnamed, the house of the people. By dismissing them from a participation of the sovereignty, we should therefore *lose nothing*: and we should gain much. For to them we do owe in great measure the weight and multitude of our taxes, the frequency of wars, and the decay of virtue and piety among us. For although they constantly adopt all your royal plans, yet they expect to be rewarded for their promptness: in order

to which an infinity of pensions and places is necessary, to the great impoverishment of the honest and the laborious part of your Majesty's subjects. And we suspect, sire ! that your servants, to whom is intrusted the management of this market, feel less aversion from the horrors of war from the knowledge, that a war may afford a specious pretext for multiplying such pensions, and doth necessarily increase their patronage to an extent which may be truly styled enormous.

We observe, sire ! a second source of war in that noisy and incessant abuse of your majesty's measures ; which it has become a fashion of state for a few men to pour forth in the legislature, and by which they make known their desires to be admitted to a share of your royal bounties. This abuse, springing altogether from their angry disappointment, or their eager hopes, or their impatient necessities, is mixed up with the noblest sentiments borrowed from the works of the enlightened and unluxurious ancients, and falsely and dangerously applied to these times and this nation. For we are convinced, sire ! that our vast commerce has made general among us that dependence and selfishness and unmanly love of splendour and pleasure, which necessarily preclude all public spirit. Free-
dom

dom is the RIGHT and natural CONSEQUENCE of VIRTUE; but for the vicious to claim it is SEDITION. Self-love however prevents men from perceiving or remembering this truth: and the harangues of an ambitious faction daily dispersed through your majesty's realms by means of printed reports spread far and wide principles of innovation and discontent, which sometimes assume so threatening an aspect, that the evils of a foreign war are resorted to in order to prevent their diffusion. And from the same source it arises, that Government which ought to employ itself for the benefit of the people, is engrossed by the anxieties of self-preservation, and that legislative power, which might have been successfully exerted to the cure and prevention of national immorality, is wasted in degrading hostilities against libels and treason. Hence arises an appearance of a diversity of interest in the crown and the nation; and hence too it becomes possible, that even in your majesty's bosom the feelings of paternal anger may occasionally displace the emotions of parental love. We therefore your people of Denmark, are willing, O beloved King! to concenter in you all the forms and powers of national sovereignty. We acknowledge with heart-felt joy, that piety, temperance, and humanity are the distinguishing marks of your majesty's character; and we believe, that by this solemn and public manifestation of our love and filial confidence, we shall incline you yet more to wish above all things the virtue and comfort of us, your assembled

sembled children; and by removing the obstacles (arising from the present necessity of corruption and terror in order to carry on the business of Government) we shall enable you to realize such wishes. Henceforward we expect, that the treasures which are yearly scrambled for by the sons of clamour, will either remain with the people and increase their domestic comforts, or be drawn out for the reward of genius and virtue, and the promotion of arts, sciences, and true religion. Countless millions will no longer be expended to shed blood and bring famine and pestilence. The barracks so thickly scattered over your majesty's realms, we have full confidence that you will convert into national schools: the instruments of slaughter, will be beat into ploughshares and pruning-hooks: and the immense magazines, in which they were piled up, will burst with grain reapt by rejoicing industry from the drained swamp, and the cultivated waste-lands! And your petitioners shall ever pray &c.

F I N I S.



ERRATA.—Page 14, For impunity read immunity;
and for intends read tends, in the same page.

